

REMARKS

Claims 10-18, 20-26, and 28-40 are currently pending in the application. In the outstanding Office Action, claims 10-17 were allowed, claims 1-9, 18, 20-24, 26-31 and 36 were rejected and claims 19, 25 and 32-35 were objected to as containing allowable subject matter.

By this response, Applicants have canceled the rejected claims and amended the remaining claims to include the subject matter indicated to be allowable. In particular, claims 1-9, 19, and 27 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claim 18 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 19, and claim 32 has been put into independent format.

Thus, all of the pending independent claims 10, 18, and 32 have been allowed or amended herein to incorporate allowable subject matter specified by the Examiner as discussed in more detail below.

Finally, Applicants have added new dependent claims 37-40 directed to further aspects of the invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all pending objections and rejections in view of the following remarks.

Drawing Acceptance

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's acceptance of the drawing filed November 9, 2005.

Traversal of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-7, 9, 18, 20-24, 26, 30 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,120,502 issued to Michelson ("Michelson"); and

Claims 8, 27-29 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Michelson.

Applicants do not agree that the combination of features recited in the above-noted claims are anticipated or rendered unpatentable over the applied art of record. However, in order to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicants have canceled claims 1-9 and 27, added the subject matter of objected to allowable claim 19 into claim 18, and rewritten objected to claim 32 into independent form. Cancellation of the above-noted claims should not be considered a surrender of the subject matter therein. Moreover, Applicants expressly reserve the right to refile the subject matter of the canceled claims in a continuation application.

Applicants respectfully assert that all of the pending claims 10-18, 20-26, and 28-40 are clearly allowable at least for the reason that the Examiner has indicated that they contain allowable subject matter.

New Dependent Claims

New dependent claims 37-40 are allowable at least due to their dependency to an allowable base claim. No new matter has been added as they find support in the specification at, *inter alia*, original claims 25, 26, 32 and 33.

Minor amendments

Additionally, minor amendments have been made to at least claims 14, 30, and 33 in order to improve the language thereof. In these amendments, Applicants have made several changes to the language of the claims to render the same more self consistent, as well as more fully in compliance with U.S. syntax, idiom and grammar. These amendments are not narrowing amendments made for the purpose of patentability and are not intended to change the scope of the claims but are merely cosmetic changes that give rise to no file wrapper estoppel.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that a full and complete response has been made to the pending Office Action and respectfully submit that all of the stated objections and grounds for rejections have been overcome or rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is thus respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the number below to expedite prosecution. Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued for this application.

Respectfully Submitted,



John S. Hilten
Reg. No. 52,518

Richard S. Meyer
Reg. No. 32,541

Date: April 10, 2006

McGuireWoods LLP
1750 Tysons Boulevard
Suite 1800
McLean, VA 22102-4215
Tel: 703-712-5427
Fax: 703-712-5240

JSH/crt